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## ABSTRACT

The content and assessment of the curriculum is under discussion in many educational systems. Because the curriculum is a product of authority relationships, the role and position of several actors executing the authority relationships in the education system are under question as well. Traditionally, inspectorates, as part of the authority structure and examination systems, have the function of guaranteeing the quality of education in general and the curriculum in particular. This paper examines how inspectorates in Germany and Russia contribute to the development of new checks and balances regarding the curriculum. It examines roles and functions of the inspectorate, trends in educational reform, the curricular content and provisions, and the educational tradition in both countries. In Germany, regulation of evaluation (quality) does not appear to be a focus of concern for reform. Centralized regulation of the curriculum guarantees a certain quality, and the inspectorates do not play an explicit role in testing and examinations. In Russia, there are many more reform activities that concern the content and quality of curriculum. Functional decentralization to nongovernmental agencies can be found in Russia, and territorial decentralization can be found in both Germany and Russia. The redistribution of power implies a reduction of the political influences in the former socialist education systems. It appears that Russian inspectorates will fill a monitoring role, with elements of control and administration.  
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**The inspectorate and the quality of the curriculum:  
developments in Eastern Europe**

Paper for the European Conference on Curriculum

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## **The inspectorate and the quality of the curriculum: developments in Eastern Europe.**

### **Introduction**

The quality of the curriculum is under discussion in many education systems. These discussions do not only regard the content of the curriculum, but its standards and assessment as well. Since the curriculum can be seen as a product of authority relationships (Lundgren, 1986), the role and position of several actors executing the authority relationships in the education system are questioned as well. These discussions cause educational reforms including changing authority relationships, changes in the curriculum and the introduction of new instruments and mechanisms for monitoring the quality of the curriculum.

Traditionally, inspectorates (as part of the authority structure) and examination systems (as a steering mechanism), have the function of guaranteeing the quality of education in general and of the curriculum in particular. It is assumed that the educational reforms mentioned affect these traditional functions.

Another assumption is that this is the case for eastern European education systems as it is for many western education systems. Therefore the main question dealt with in this paper will be how inspectorates contribute to realising new checks and balances regarding the curriculum in former eastern European education systems.

### **Framework of description**

In describing how inspectorates contribute to the realisation of new checks and balances regarding the curriculum attention will be paid to the following elements: roles and functions of the inspectorate, trends in educational reform, the curricular content and provisions and the tradition of the education system. Why and how these elements are chosen will be explained underneath.

As most education systems, former Eastern European education systems used to have and still have inspectorates. In most education systems inspectorates are expected to contribute to the quality of education in one way or another. How they do this in practice depends very much on the tradition of the education system concerned and especially on the authority structure of it.

This is illustrated by experiences in EC countries as reported by CERI/OECD (1991). Reported is a wide range of roles of inspectorates depending on the authority structure in which they have to function. The position of inspectorates is often felt as a precarious one. This seems to be caused by trends in educational reform like decentralisation, increasing autonomy of schools and the coming up of evaluation of public policies.

As far as the functions of inspectorates are concerned a move can be recognised from monitoring rules and regulations as practiced by the schools, to the assessment of and contribution to educational reform policies and their implementation. Another move recognised by the EC inspectorates is one to a more overall approach to conditions in schools and the assessment of teacher effectiveness.

Problems noticed by the inspectorates in the perspective of these developments are: the tension between local and central authorities; the relation between teachers and administrators and the search for a new balance between the inspectorate's functions of monitoring and advice. It is felt that approaches for coping with these problems differ according to the (de-)centralised character of the education system concerned.

Although the CERI/OECD report is on inspectorates in EC-countries, the issues mentioned seem to apply to former Eastern European countries as well.

Processes of decentralisation occur in many education systems, also in Eastern Europe. Weiler (1990) distinguishes functional decentralisation to non-governmental agencies and territorial decentralisation to subnational units of a smaller size. He presents three models of argument for such processes:

- a redistribution, having to do with the sharing of power,
- b efficiency, which is expected to enhance the cost-effectiveness of the education system through a better management of resources and
- c cultures of learning, which implies decentralisation of educational content

He also pays attention to the relationship between decentralisation and evaluation as a mechanism for control. This relationship between decentralisation and evaluation is problematic for three different, but interrelated reasons:

- a a lack of consensus on the objectives of education
- b the linkage between evaluation and control
- c evaluation tends to be seen and used more for its legitimating than for its informative capacity.

He concludes that "both decentralisation and evaluation have to do with the exercise of power and there is always the possibility that the power that decentralisation gives away with one hand, evaluation may take back with the other" (Weiler, 1990, p446). It is supposed that the role of inspectorates in these processes might be influential although not very obvious. Therefore special attention is paid to the roles and position of inspectorates in these processes.

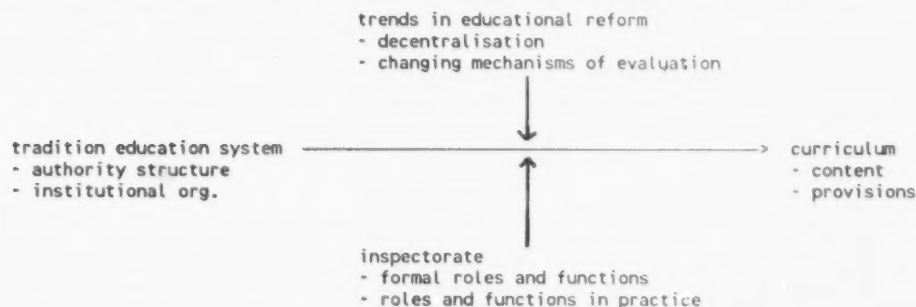
The quality of the curriculum is an important element of the quality of education systems. Following Pelgrum (1989) an intended, an implemented and a realised curriculum will be distinguished. The intended curriculum is the one which is to be found in legislation and other regulations; what this curriculum looks like depends very much on the authority structure and the institutional organisation of the education system.

The implemented curriculum is the one which can be found in materials and equipment used in the educational process, what and how teachers teach, etc. In short: the provisions.

The realised curriculum is the one which is found through evaluation of what is actually learned. The realised curriculum will remain beyond the scope of this paper.

The content of the curriculum is very much determined by the traditional curriculum theories rooted in the education system concerned (Holmes and McLean, 1989; Goodson, 1987). Mechanisms for guaranteeing the quality of the curriculum can be seen as a result of the tradition of the authority structure of the education system concerned. Whatever these traditions are, standards and assessment attract increasingly attention in controlling the quality of the curriculum (OECD, 1993). Although this is a very interesting and important theme, only elements of it will be mentioned. This will be done as far as necessary for understanding the contribution of inspectorates towards the mechanisms of guaranteeing the quality of the curriculum.

The considerations presented are shown schematically in the following model:



This framework of description will be used for describing the situation in Germany, especially the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) and in Russia as examples of eastern European countries facing huge educational reforms. This will be done by studying literature as well as using information collected during visits to Germany and Russia.

Both former education systems can be characterised as firmly centralised systems in which a detailed prescribed curriculum was realised. Since 1989/1990 much is changing in this respect.

The concept of decentralising educational policy-making and administration seems to be flourishing in both countries. The curriculum is no longer prescribed in detail neither does it appear to be controlled firmly nowadays. Questions regarding the quality of education have to be faced given these new circumstances. As a consequence roles and functions of inspectorates have to change.

An interesting difference in the circumstances of change is that in Germany the former GDR-system is adjusted to the former FRG-system whereas in Russia the education system has to reform from within. This causes different conditions for realising the new checks and balances needed. It might be interesting to study the outcomes of these educational reform processes for the time being given the similar tradition in both education systems (at least the last few decades). It is expected that the dynamics of these processes turn out to be similar to a certain extent but also differ. As far as the influence of inspectorates on the implemented curriculum is concerned it is expected that the scope, objects and 'methods' of control and advice differ.

In order to find out whether these expectations are correct the model presented will be used and elaborated by concentrating the analysis of information on the following topics:

- organisation of inspectorates,
- their formal relations and competencies in the education system,
- the character of the relation between inspectorates and schools (hierarchical, supportive, administrative, intermediary, other)
- 'methods' used by inspectorates to influence the implemented curriculum,
- objects of influencing the implemented curriculum,
- regulations regarding the content and implementation of the curriculum, and
- provisions for realising the curriculum like teachers, teaching materials and other resources.

## **Description of developments in Germany and Russia**

### *Germany, especially the former German Democratic Republic*

Germany has a strong federal tradition. It consists of 16 states (Laender) each of which has its own tradition of a centralised authority structure. The inspectorates exist since 1919. Although the inspectorates differed and still differ per state their main tasks used to be to control the execution of legislation and to advice teachers pedagogically. Traditionally they also have a hierarchical administrative role as far as the assessment of teachers is concerned.

Five of the 16 states have a separate history because they formed the German Democratic Republic.

In the society of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) the leading socialist party (SED) was an important element which heavily influenced the education system.

The main characteristics of the uniform GDR education system were:

- basic education for everyone in the compulsory schoolage organised along comprehensive lines in the integrated polytechnic school (POS)
- a detailed prescribed content and a subject-based presentation of the curriculum, emphasizing the polytechnical principle and the scientific/technological orientation in the curriculum realised in the school and emphasizing the social-pedagogical elements mainly in the almost obliged extra-curricular activities.
- strongly controlled curricular provisions
- the importance of the collectivity in school and in extra-curricular activities.

The quality of education in general and of the curriculum in particular was guaranteed through extensive legislation and regulation on the one hand and on the other hand through a rather extensive supporting and inspecting apparatus which mainly concentrated on influencing schoolleaders and teachers. Schools as an entity were not subject to inspection. At the central level the institute for teacher training and the inspectorate were the main actors at the minister's disposal for steering the institutes for teacher training and the inspectorates at the regional and local levels. At all levels the inspectorates controlled the teacher training institutes.

The local inspectorates (Kreisschulinspektion) had pedagogical committees (Kreiskabinette) at their disposal. These committees consisted of teachers, schoolleaders and advisors; they were organised per subject. The advisors were responsible for advising teachers and for reporting about what happened in the schools. They thus executed a direct form of educational control and steering.

The tasks of the local inspectors consisted of controlling the schoolleaders, cooperation with employers, cooperation with the youth organisations (FDJ and Pionierorganisation) in the schools, ideological training of teachers and preparing policy-decisions. Thus the local inspectors concentrated on the administrative control and steering of the schools. The control of the teaching staff was a responsibility of the schoolleader (Waterkamp, 1987).

Since 1990 huge reforms had to be coped with in the former GDR education system. These reforms imply, with some variation per state, adjustment to the education system as it had developed in the Federal Republic of Germany (Fuhr, 1992). Comprehensive schooling almost disappeared and a less uniform and more selective education system, which is relatively loosely coordinated at the federal level, came into being in the five new states (Laender). The German education system now consists of 16 education systems with some common features. It should be realised that when describing changes it is not only the former GDR education system which changes. Reforms were and are also going on the former FRG.

As a consequence of these changes the three main levels in the authority structure became the federal level, the level of the individual states and the schoollevel.

Territorial decentralisation to the individual states can be recognised, but it should be realised that at this level the authority structure generally has a rather centralised character. There is some loose coordination at the federal level through the KMK (Culture Minister's Conference) and the KSD (Conference of Schoolinspectors).

The curricular guidelines are less detailed than they used to be in the GDR and not any longer provided by central government. However, the individual states prescribe them centrally for each state. New teaching materials are introduced, and the extra-curricular activities barely exist any longer.

The scientific orientation of the curriculum remained, as this is a traditional feature of the FRG curriculum as well, but with less emphasis on the technological and more on the literary element of the curriculum. School external examinations, set by inspectorates, are replaced by school-oriented examinations.

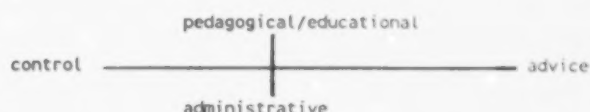
On the whole the autonomy of the former GDR schools increased. For many schools this is a nice experience although they also seem to experience an increased bureaucracy. Generally a

trend for increasing autonomy at the schoollevel can be recognised all over Germany, including increasing local influence on the curriculum (Weiss, 1993).

How do these territorial decentralising changes in the authority structure, as well as in the educational structure of the former GDR education system, affect the mechanisms for guaranteeing the quality of education? The quality of education is now mainly guaranteed through centralised regulation of the content of the curriculum by the individual states. The execution of the regulations is controlled via the inspectorates. The mechanism of guaranteeing the quality of education through school-external testing and examinations cannot be recognised in the FRG because the examinations are school-oriented.

The regulations concerning the curriculum deal mainly with the content of it and to a lesser extent with the provisions. Nevertheless it should be realised that some of the provisions (for example teachers) are subject to central rules, guidelines and control.

The inspectorates have hierarchical, administrative roles as well as assessing and advisory roles towards especially teachers. The organisation of the inspectorates differs per state but has a general pattern in which on the one hand educational and administrative tasks, and on the other hand controlling and advisory roles can be distinguished. Gampe (1994) provides a nice schematic summary of the inspectorate's scope of action and tension in executing their functions:



At first sight the two traditions of inspectorates in the GDR and the FRG seem to be rather similar. In the GDR the advisors operating under the responsibility of the local inspectorates coped with educational control whereas the local inspectors had to execute administrative control and the head of the school had to control the teaching staff.

Nowadays in the FRG three types of inspection activities are recognised: administrative, subject area oriented and supervision of service (Rechtsaufsicht, Fachaufsicht and Dienstaufsicht). The first two tasks are executed by inspectors; the supervision of service is the responsibility of the school's principal. Note that 'supervision of service' at least appears to imply a less controlling oriented scope, object and method of operation than the 'control of teachers' does.

However, discussions with inspectors who have to do the job in the new states showed that it still is a kind of a 'culture shock' for them to function under the new enforced conditions of the education system of the old states. In the same discussions the impression was that especially in the new states the inspectorates concentrate on their supportive and advisory functions and at least experience their controlling functions as less important these days. This seems to fit in with a general tendency of training inspectors for strengthening their supportive capacities and the increasing emphasis on their advisory function as described by Kruger (1992).

Nevertheless, inspectorates still have a strong hierarchical administrative role in especially the assessment of teachers. In the former GDR this used to be a responsibility of the heads of schools; now they seem to be more or less released from this duty.

### *Russia*

The Russian Federation is an immense and diverse state with a strong centralised tradition; since 1917 directed by the communist ideology. The structure and organisation of the education system reflect the strongly centralised tradition. Although formally several

responsibilities were delegated to other levels in the authority structure, the strict and centralised ideological control from the federal level guaranteed great uniformity and central steering of the education system in all 80 territories or regions. Each region has its own Department of Education and within these regions there are district departments of education.

Since 1925 there is an inspectorate which operates at all levels from the federation to the schools (Reuten, 1993). It seems that there used to be a very close cooperation between inspectorates and education departments. The impression is that the inspectorates mainly controlled the execution of legislation and regulations on the one hand, and on the other hand used to be involved with administrative duties in the order of providing resources etc. The 'lowest' level of inspectorate used to be the head of a school who had controlling as well as administrative functions.

Some important basic principles of the former uniform soviet education system are:

- education is a state affair,
- the provision of education is free of charge, the system is uniform throughout the country and provides at least 10 year of compulsory education for everyone,
- the curriculum is based on polytechnical and scientific principles and
- the communist upbringing has a central place in education as well as in the extra-curricular activities offered by youth organisations (Treffers, 1989).

Guaranteeing the quality of education used to be realised through the control of input in terms of regulations and provisions. The effect of controlling quality through input alone appeared to be doubtful because a constant need for reform and optimisation was felt in the Russian education system (Glowka, 1987). Firsov, Kovalyova and Loginova (1994) characterise the situation as follows: "the multiplicity of reforms indicated the obvious dissatisfaction of the state and society with school as well as the failure in its reforming without the change of ideological paradigm".

Since perestroika such a change of the ideological paradigm seems to occur and this also influences the development of the education system. Decentralisation, a changing content of the curriculum, differentiation in and between schools, increasing autonomy of schools and changing roles for several, if not all, actors in the education system attract attention in this respect (Glowka and Novikov, 1989; Ministry of Education, 1992; Jennes a.o., 1994).

An important document settling these developments for the time being and providing a framework for further development of the education system is the in 1992 accepted Law on Education of the Russian Federation. In this law several novelties, which break down the centralised tradition, can be recognised. Some examples are: the possibilities for foundations other than the state to start a school and the increasing autonomy of the schools which has to be laid down in a charter per school. Under the new regulations schools can create distinct profiles for example by offering profound teaching in certain subjects.

Some decentralisation of the curriculum is introduced with the introduction of educational requirements and standards which will be formulated at the federal (50%) as well as at the national/regional (25%) and the schoollevel (25%). This breaks with the tradition of central regulation of the content of the intended as well as the implemented curriculum through legislation, centrally controlled provisions of all kind and control by the inspectorates. In this tradition curriculum development is seen as development of methods.

The new thinking on the content and standards of education, as reflected in the Law on Education, does not seem to fit in with the Russian tradition because curriculum development is not any longer seen as the development of methods. A growing awareness of the necessity of developing new instruments and mechanisms for regulating and maintaining the quality of the curriculum can be recognised.

This implies new tasks and functions for existing actors in the system, like departments of

education and inspectorates, but also the introduction of new actors. Some of these new tasks, in which several (and also new) actors are involved, are formulating standards and developing testing and examination systems. Much seems to be in the meltingpot in order to reform the guaranteeing of the quality of education via these instruments. It is even tried to launch a new institution with responsibilities regarding testing and examinations. For guaranteeing and monitoring the quality of education through testing and examinations, explicitly formulated standards seem to be needed. How these standards will be formulated and controlled is not yet settled. A lack of experience and tradition in this respect appears to be felt in practice.

However, following the Law on Education of 1992 a provisional standard is published in 1993 for general basic education (read: compulsory education). This is done in a general introduction and per subject. Some ideas about assessment seem also to be presented. Reforms and further developments in this respect are still going on.

The inspectorates seem to be involved with it, but it looks like they have to operate within sometimes surprising legal constraints. Although several sections of the law mention the need for controlling of the quality of education, the inspectorates are not mentioned explicitly. The inspectorates as such seem to be a delicate topic. This was illustrated when the head of a school was asked about his relation with the inspectorate. His prompt answer was that there is no inspectorate anylonger. In practice this turned out not to be exactly the case, but it is a nice illustration of the perceived changes.

The inspectorates nowadays operate according to the Act of order of March 1992. The supplement of this act provides the following information about the inspectorate's functions and position. Formally the federal inspectorate is independent from the Russian Ministry of Education. The inspectorate aims to "provide information needed for the development of the education system, to contribute to the implementation of federal educational policies, to produce information about the condition of education, to control legislation, standards and norms in education and to control the attestation of institutions and pedagogical staff" (Supplement, 1992). The federal inspectorate is expected to collaborate with departments of education and inspectorates at the regional, local and schoollevel.

At each level the inspectorate has four main tasks: controlling (legislation in practice), observing (problems), providing (facilities and recognitions in administrative terms) and evaluating (activities of actors on a more local level in the system). An example of the consequences of the execution of these four tasks at each level in the education system is the federal inspectorate further analysing information from regional inspectorates.

At the local level groups of methodists in charge of the local departments of education exist alongside the inspectorates. These methodists can be seen as experts per subject. They have mainly didactical / educational supportive tasks. They cope with questions regarding the content and realisation of the curriculum. Formally they have no inspecting tasks but local inspectors can charge them with such tasks, for example when support seems to be needed in order to realise a certain quality in implementing the curriculum.

Methodists might well be more influential than inspectors; at least as far as the implemented curriculum is concerned. At the regional and local level they also seem to be involved with the development of the curriculum and standards which, if this observation is correct, implies also influence on the intended curriculum.

Thus the inspectorates at all levels seem to have mainly controlling and administrative functions whereas the methodists seem to concentrate on intermediate and advisory functions.

Complications in these processes of reform are the bad condition of educational provisions, the lack of resources, and the 'a-legal' tradition of Russia. As Vavilov (1993) says "...there is a feeling of dependance of school administration from local authorities, and as a result, unwillingness 'to spoil relations', a strong tradition of a patriarchal way of management".

## Comparison

The traditions of the education systems of the GDR and Russia seem to be similar at least for the last few decades. Both systems were centralised with a controlled input of: 10 years of compulsory schooling for everyone provided by the state, an in detail prescribed curriculum based on polytechnical and scientific principles, strongly controlled curricular provisions and important extra-curricular activities provided by youth organisations.

The inspectorates in the former FRG and Russia seem to have had similar organisational structures and functions as well, although on a different scale due to the very different sizes of the countries. It looks like the pedagogical commissions and the methodists could be compared in their position and functioning in the former education systems. In both systems the head of a school used to have inspectorate tasks too. Another similarity is the controlling as well as the hierarchical, administrative function of inspectors especially as far as the assessment of teachers is concerned.

However, both systems differed in their roots despite their similarities in the second half of the 20th century.

The German education system and therefore also the education system of the GDR is rooted in the German-Prussian tradition. During the last few decades, the GDR education system is influenced by and to a certain extent 'filled with' the socialist ideology. Nevertheless quite a bit of the traditional functions, of for example the authority structure, remained in the GDR. Discipline and order remained to be important values in this respect. The same seems to apply for the core of the curriculum as far as its scientific character is concerned. The German-Prussian tradition cannot be found so clearly in the institutional structure of the GDR-system.

In Russia there is a long totalitarian tradition in the authority structure which goes back to the pre-communist era. However, the centralised authority structure and the federal ideological control guaranteed an input controlled education system. The Russians also seem to have a common sense for a certain extent of anarchy and lethargy which influences the functioning of the authority structure in a patriarchal way.

The main features of the institutional structure of the education system, as it is known now, are introduced after the revolution of 1917. Thus this institutional structure, which is similar to the GDR one, has a longer tradition than that of the GDR. The same seems to apply for the curriculum which used to be based on polytechnical and scientific principles.

The trends in educational reform are also similar as well as different. In both education systems the reforms of the 1990s are caused by the same ideological crisis breaking down the centrally organised societies almost at the same time. Due to this crisis, both education systems faced new demands having to do with a changing content of the curriculum, a serious reorganisation of the authority-structure, a reshuffling of the institutional structure of the education system, a lack of resources and a lack of professional experience needed in order to cope with these new demands.

The content of the curriculum changes in both countries. First of all, ideological elements are removed. Secondly, new elements are added, like strengthening of the literary component in the former GDR and of the humanities and social sciences in the curriculum of Russia. Furthermore, regulation of the content is less centralised.

The say over the curriculum is especially in Russia decentralised and divided among the federal, regional and school level. The development of standards, testing and examinations is in progress. These developments occur much less in Germany.

The institutional organisation of the curriculum changes as well. Even though until now the changes in this respect seem to be bigger in the former GDR than in Russia. In the new states of the FRG all schools are reorganised according to the principles of the categorical FRG systems. Due to the autonomy of the individual states some variation can be found, but

the general pattern is that the 10 year school for compulsory education disappeared and a more categorical organised system is introduced. This implies huge problems for the provions needed (for example inadequate buildings).

In Russia there seems to be reform going on regarding the institutional structure of the curriculum but less obvious and less radical than in the former GDR. Here it seems more to be a matter of adding new institutional modalities (for example gymnasias) to the existing structure, than replacing the whole structure.

The reorganisation of the authority structure has mainly to do with decentralisation. In the former GDR there is a considerable amount of territorial decentralisation to the level of the five new states of the FRG, but at this level the practice is a rather centralised one. The coordination by the KMK (Culture Minister's Conference) constraints the effects of strong formal decentralisation to the individual states. Although fitting in with the West-German tradition implies centralised regulation at the state level, this regulation is experienced as being much less restrictive than former GDR educational professionals were used to. In Russia territorial decentralisation can also be recognised; the relations between federal, regional, local and schoollevel are changing. Some preliminary functional decentralisation can be recognised too. Examples are: the changing roles of the training institutes for teachers, the several institutes available for support in the development of curricula and standards, and the launching of an institute for testing and examinations. These developments might well have consequences for the inspectorates at all levels. If this is the case and how, is something subject to speculations.

The consequences for the inspectorates of the developments described differ in both countries.

The former GDR inspectorate is getting adjusted to the FRG system of organising educational inspectorates. This implies central organisation of inspectorates at the level of the individual states with loose coordination at federal level through the KSD (Conference of Schoolinspectors). Due to the traditional similarities mentioned this looks like a minor change, but the experience of inspectors in the five new states is that it is rather hard to get accustomed to the 'new' roles and functions.

Due to the removal or incorporation of the former pedagogical committees in favour of the inspectorate as such, the inspectorates in the former GDR-states experience an increased attention to advisory tasks. Strengthened by the kind and number of problems arising in schools, which have to be solved with the assistance of inspectorates, their concentration on supportive tasks is something remarkable. This development is not only remarkable but probably also fitting in with, or maybe even a matter of being ahead of, a trend in reform of inspectorate's tasks all over Germany (see also Kruger).

For the time being the Russian inspectorate is completely reorganised due to new legislation. In executing their tasks some tension can be recognised by the traditional execution of functions and the new constraints set by decentralising tendencies. The autonomy of local and regional inspectorates seems to increase, but should not be overestimated. Furthermore, many other elements of the education system are in a process of change too while at the same time the condition of the educational resources and provisions is bad. This makes it even more difficult for Russian inspectors to operate. However, it looks like they are still seen as actors needed for guaranteeing the quality of education. The summing up of their functions in the Act of Order suggests still a controlling function, leaving space for some administrative functions as well. An increasing interest in monitoring the education system as such can be recognised. The same applies for increasing monitoring at the school level instead of mainly evaluating individual teachers.

To which extent inspectorates at all levels are exactly involved in the development of curricula, standards and examinations is not clear yet. Nevertheless, it looks like the inspectorates, but at the local and school level probably more the methodists, can influence the outcomes of these processes. A difference to be noticed is the fact that in Russia the

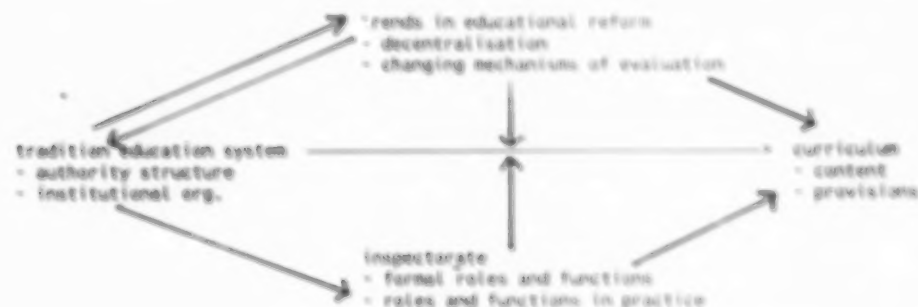
methodists are still there, so pedagogical support and advice remained to a certain extent a separate task which is not incorporated in the inspectorate.

So far the main similarities and some of the differences in the recent reforms. A very important, if not the main difference between the GDR and Russia is the fact that the GDR is more or less incorporated by the FRG, whereas Russia has to do it on its own strength. In the new states of the FRG most of the professionals who functioned in the GDR system have to do the job in an education system which is in some respects new for them, but which already proved its value and does provide them a new frame of reference. In Russia the job also has to be done by people who were in the education system before and therefore have a particular frame of reference with some *implicit* or explicit ideals. The new structure of the Russian education system is still developing and the new frame of reference is not very clear yet.

Education is, in this period of reform, a political as well as a professional topic which causes excitement and concern. The new federal law on education brought some relaxation because it sets the framework within which the professionals have to develop the education system. However, much uncertainty is felt in exploring the new mechanisms for regulating the education system. The formulation of educational requirements, standards and mechanisms for testing are just some examples where these difficulties in finding new ways for guaranteeing the quality of education can be seen. The attachment to old responsibilities of some actors crash sometimes with the engagement with new responsibilities of other actors.

The model of description turned out to be useful. Some of the relations supposed at the beginning can be refined now. This refined model deserves to be tried out further, but for the time being it can be said that: trends are influenced by the tradition and influence the development of the tradition. These influences occur not only in the changing authority and institutional structures, but also in the content and provisions of the curriculum. Due to these changes the roles and functions of inspectorates are changing too; formally as well as in practice.

A more advanced scheme of the model is shown underneath:



## Conclusions

The principles of socialist education systems as described by Meier (1987) are left. In these systems "Centrally systematized curricula, standardized textbooks, and highly formalized outcomes are intended to achieve an optimal fit between schooling and societal needs." Compared to this strongly centralised and politically steered tradition of the education systems of the former GDR and Soviet Union, the actual reforms of these systems are huge. This applies especially for Russia because this education system was more uniform and less structured than the GDR system was (Meier, 1987) and because the Russian system has to be reformed into a 'new' system whereas the former GDR system is incorporated in an

existing education system. Another reason why the changes for the GDR system are less radical is that the public education system remains public including public control and steering of, among other aspects, the curriculum in a German-Prussian tradition (see also Tillmann, 1994). The quality of the curriculum is thus guaranteed through public mechanisms functioning already for years.

The comparison presented, describes the different character and scope of changes in the Russian education system. Due to the more fundamental change to something really new, an increasing importance of setting standards for and testing the results of learning can be recognised in the perspective of guaranteeing the quality of the curriculum.

In the former GDR the FRG tradition of mainly school-internal testing and examinations is adapted. Regulation of these processes regarding the quality of education does not seem to cause much concern in terms of reform. The German tradition of centralised regulation of the curriculum guarantees a certain quality. The inspectorates seem not to have an explicit role regarding testing and examinations.

In Russia much more concern about the content and quality of the curriculum can be recognised, resulting in many reform activities. Standards are seen as important elements to be used by many actors in the process of guaranteeing the quality of education in general and of the curriculum in particular. Firsov, Kovalyova and Loginova (1994) state very clearly why it is so important to search for new mechanisms of guaranteeing the quality of the curriculum and for redefining the roles and functions of actors, and among them for example the inspectorates. They say that the Russian school deserves instruments for creating diversity and decentralisation of schools guaranteeing a certain standard.

Relating the findings of this brief investigation more explicitly to Weiler's models of argument (Weiler, 1990) results in the following conclusions for the time being. Functional decentralisation to non-governmental agencies can be found in Russia. Territorial decentralisation can be found in Germany and Russia. The argument of the redistribution of power seems to be there in both cases. It implies a reduction of the political influences in the former socialist education systems.

The argument of effectiveness of the education system is not found explicitly.

Finally the argument of decentralisation of educational content seems especially to apply to Russia.

According to Weiler (1990) processes of decentralisation which obviously occur in Russia (and not only regarding the curriculum) imply the necessity of evaluation in one way or another. This necessity is felt in Russia, as is expressed in the search for standards, modalities of testing, etc. Although the exact roles and functions of the Russian inspectorates in the future cannot yet be described in detail, it looks like they might stick to a monitoring role with elements of control and administration. It also appears that they have to cope with new modalities for executing these responsibilities.

The tendency of developing monitoring techniques which serve evaluation at the school level as well as at the system's level might well turn out to be a new mechanism of quality control in Russia. It might even be a mechanism which will at least attract attention in the German education system as well. Some first indications of interest in this direction can be found among inspectorates. Combined with the processes of increasing autonomy for schools as mentioned by Weiss (1993), Germany might also provide some evidence for Weiler's theory.

The inspectorate's roles and functions in these processes became not very clear in Germany nor in Russia, but it is suspected that they do influence what is going on. The impression is even that they have to contribute actively in these developments; for example by exploring possibilities of monitoring the quality of the implemented as well as the realised curriculum.

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